Damn that Devils Lake diversion

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Michael Kaeshammer gets jazzy

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Rolling natural 20s for 58 years.

MARTLET

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AND THE GEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

REVENGE OF THE NERD - Page 5

GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

Editorial

Water rights eroded

Imagine your neighbour decided to pump water into your yard. Now imagine the water was contaminated.

This is the problem facing Manitoba, thanks to their neighbour, North Dakota.

Since 1993 the level of Devils Lake has risen nearly 25 feet (about 7.5 metres) and doubled in size. Flooding caused more than $450 million US in damages, farmlands were inundated and some 200 homes had to be moved. The state spent $28 million US to build an outlet to divert water into the nearby Sheyenne River and lower the water level.

So why the cross-border tensions? The Sheyenne River flows into the Red River, which flows north into Lake Winnipeg.

This has a number of groups, including the governments of Canada and Manitoba, the Canadian Wildlife Federation and Friends of the Earth, concerned about the impact of the project.

Lake Winnipeg and Devils Lake haven't been connected in years. In fact, Devils Lake has not naturally overflowed to the Sheyenne River for over 1800 years.

And that means there are a lot of things — including high levels of pollution — in Devils Lake that aren't in Lake Winnipeg. Introducing them could cause a world of harm.

It's not even clear that the diversion will work. The outlet will lower the lake by two feet, and according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, would do little to protect the communities around the lake.

Canadian concerns haven't been completely ignored. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended that the diversion include a sand filter to prevent the transfer of species, and that construction be postponed for further studies.

The U.S. State Department also asked North Dakota to consult with it before proceeding, so as to "avoid unnecessary conflicts between the United States and Canada or its concerned provinces."

There's even a body — the International Joint Commission (IJC) — to deal with boundary water issues like this.

But North Dakota has failed to consult anyone, perhaps because it knows the diversion is illegal. The Boundary Waters Treaty states "waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other," and the IJC tends to rule in favour of environmental protection.

So last summer, tired of delays, the North Dakota government began constructing its own "temporary" diversion, involving six kilometres of pipeline, 16 kilometres of canal, three siphons — and no sand filter.

North Dakota's go-it-alone, consequences be damned, cowboy mentality is threatening more than just Lake Winnipeg. If the precedent is set, what reason will there be for anyone to go to the IJC in the future? One mechanism for protecting water rights — both Canadian and American — will simply be washed away.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice can force the issue to go to the IJC, but she hasn't. It's time for the American government to step up and make North Dakota follow the rules.

If the water is allowed to flow north July 1, more problems will follow.

Editorial topics are decided at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

Don't like what you read? Write us, or write for us. edit@martlet.ca

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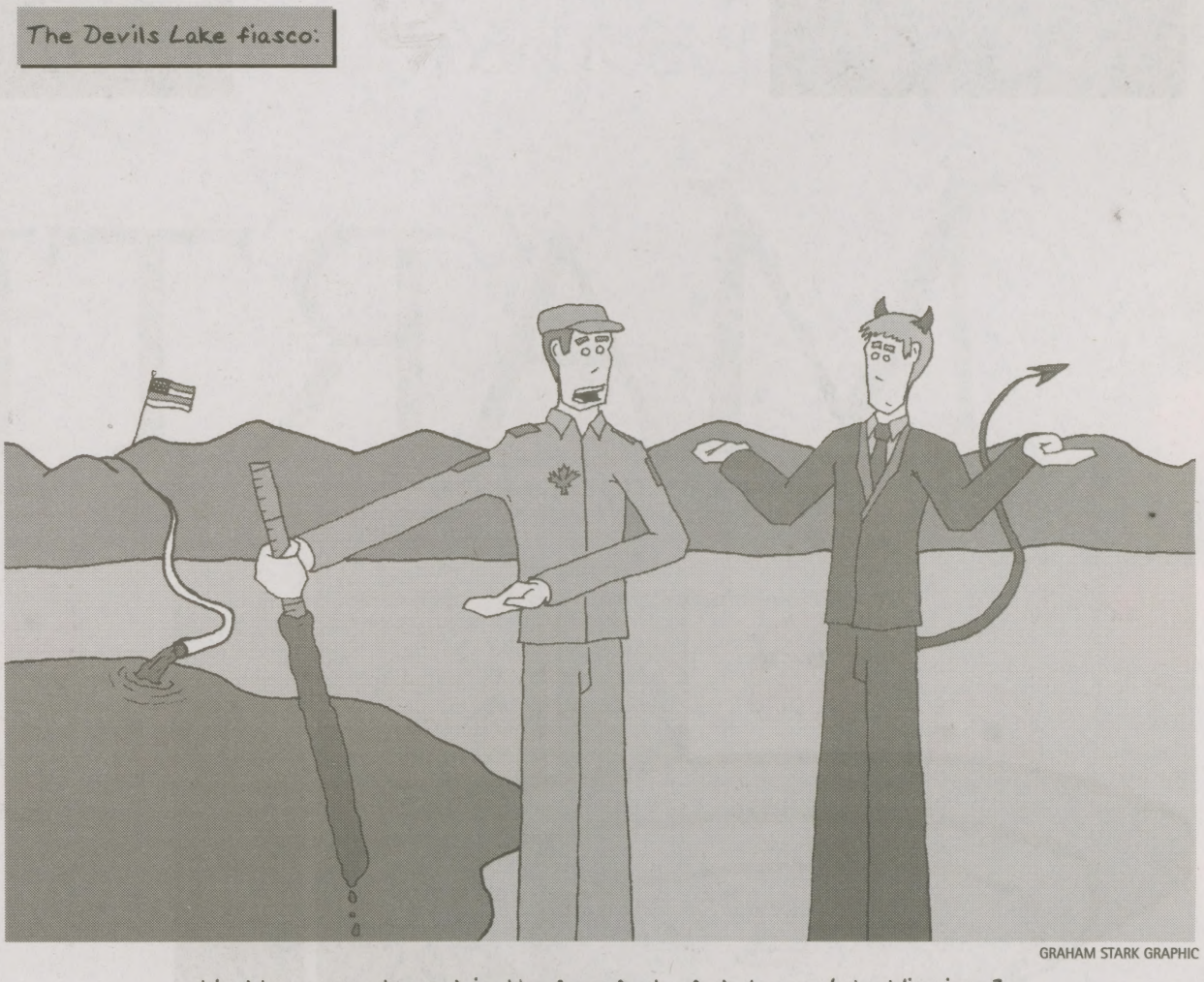


GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

Welcome to McUVic

If UVic needs 'branding' to get students, does that mean it sucks?

by Bryna Hallam

So the university spent $99,223 to the Educational Marketing Group Inc., an American consulting firm, to spruce up the UVic "brand."

This seems to confirm what we've been thinking all along: the university is not so much a place of education as a business. Educating us is fine and dandy, not to mention somewhat necessary — customer satisfaction and all that nonsense — but the key is finding more consumers, uh, students, to take our places when we're done.

According to *Monday Magazine*, which obtained a copy of the contract between EMG and UVic, the firm is to identify a "focused, relevant and distinctive position for the university and a limited number of key institutional messages" in order to "serve its target audiences effectively and to increase the impact of its interactions with them."

Ultimately, the university is developing a "strategic communications plan for the university that will support institutional goals in fund-raising, relationship building, image-recognition and the recruitment of outstanding students, faculty and staff."

A look at EMG's website spells it out: "While a handful of the . . . best-known institutions — those like Stanford, MIT, Yale, Harvard — have established strong brand names based on their academic programs, most institutions have found it difficult to establish who they are, why they are unique, and what they stand for."

So what they're saying is that UVic can't rely on its academic record to speak for itself. Does that mean it sucks? Well, if the university has to shell out big bucks for someone to manufacture a reputation for it, you have to wonder.

Makes you feel good about your decision to come here, doesn't it?

But wait. You *did* choose to come here. So did I. And as members of the university's "target audience," we can probably give them some advice on how to best attract "outstanding" students. Hell, I'll even do it for free.

First off, don't blow $100,000 on consultants, especially not for "branding." We students like to pretend that universities are about education. Paying for a brand makes it clear that we are consumers and the university is a business. That makes us feel dirty in a Paris Hilton kind of way.

If you have to spend money, make sure it's on education. Make a few scholarships or bursaries. Fix up Clearihue. Buy more books for the library. Update lab equipment. Keep our profs happy. Open up more sections for popular classes. Keep class sizes, especially for those key first-year courses, down.

Which is to say, spend the money on things that *actually* enhance your ability to provide us an education, and not on things that just make it appear like you do.

Because in the end, that's what we students are here for. And no matter how much you spend to lure us in, no matter how slick the advertising, the quality of education will ultimately speak for itself. "Branding" won't change that.

Flying with Big Brother

'I'd rather pay a little more cash for a flight than hand over my identity'

by Norman Ed Baskerville

U.S. airspace security could fuck over the Canadian consumer.

Currently it's mandatory that planes flying in or out of the U.S. provide authorities with a passenger manifest. They then compare the passenger list with their no-fly database, looking for individuals suspected of posing "a risk of air piracy or terrorism or a threat to airline or passenger safety."

Okay, fair enough. The American "freedom machine" has pissed off a lot of people around the world and some are going to cross borders. But now the U.S. is considering expanding the program to include planes that merely fly through their airspace.

If the U.S. authorities discover that a person on their no-fly list is on a flight that has already taken off, the aircraft could be diverted to another airport, rerouted to fly around U.S. airspace or forced to return to its point of origin.

Recently, a KLM airlines Netherlands to Mexico flight carrying a passenger on the no-fly list returned to Amsterdam after U.S transportation security refused it entry to U.S airspace.

Here's how it bites you: of the 160,000 Canadian flights entering U.S airspace, 120,000 of them are travelling domestically. Many flights, for example Montreal to Halifax, or Vancouver to Toronto, cross U.S. airspace to save time and fuel.

What will Canadian airlines do if the U.S. proposal becomes law? According to Canada's transport minister, Jean Lapierre, implementation of the measure would force Canadian airlines to fly more northerly routes, which would lead to fare increases.

Good. I'd rather pay a little more cash for a flight than hand over my identity to anyone. It's not that I have anything to hide from the Orwellian overlords to the south - it's just that I've always thought that Big Brother was a bit of a prick. Think about it, do you want U.S. security, or anyone else for that matter, looking through your private information?

Come to think of it, I wonder how many Canadians are on the U.S.'s secret no-fly list? I'll pay for the extra fuel to fly the long way over Canadian soil just so I don't ever hear that the U.S. won't let some poor schmuck in Montreal fly over Maine to get to Halifax because she or he is on their list of suspected terrorists.

Damned if you drain, damned if you don't

North Dakota water diversion threatens Lake Winnipeg, negotiations over B.C. mining project

by Patrick Szpak

The people of Devils Lake, N.D. are one step closer to solving their backyard flooding woes.

But in doing so, they may be pumping an even larger problem north to their neighbours in Manitoba, potentially damaging the environment and a longstanding treaty between Canada and the United States.

On June 3, the North Dakota Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the state's plan to lower the rising water of Devils Lake could go forward despite objections raised by the Manitoba provincial government.

"We didn't get the result we were hoping for," said Manitoba Premier Gary Doer, noting that the North Dakota court could not consider wider international implications.

North Dakota's plan to deal with the rising lake water is to simply pump the excess into the nearby Sheyenne River, which drains into the Red River, which in turn flows north into Lake Winnipeg. Known as the "Peterson Coulee temporary emergency outlet," the project cost the state $28 million US and is scheduled to open in early July 2005.

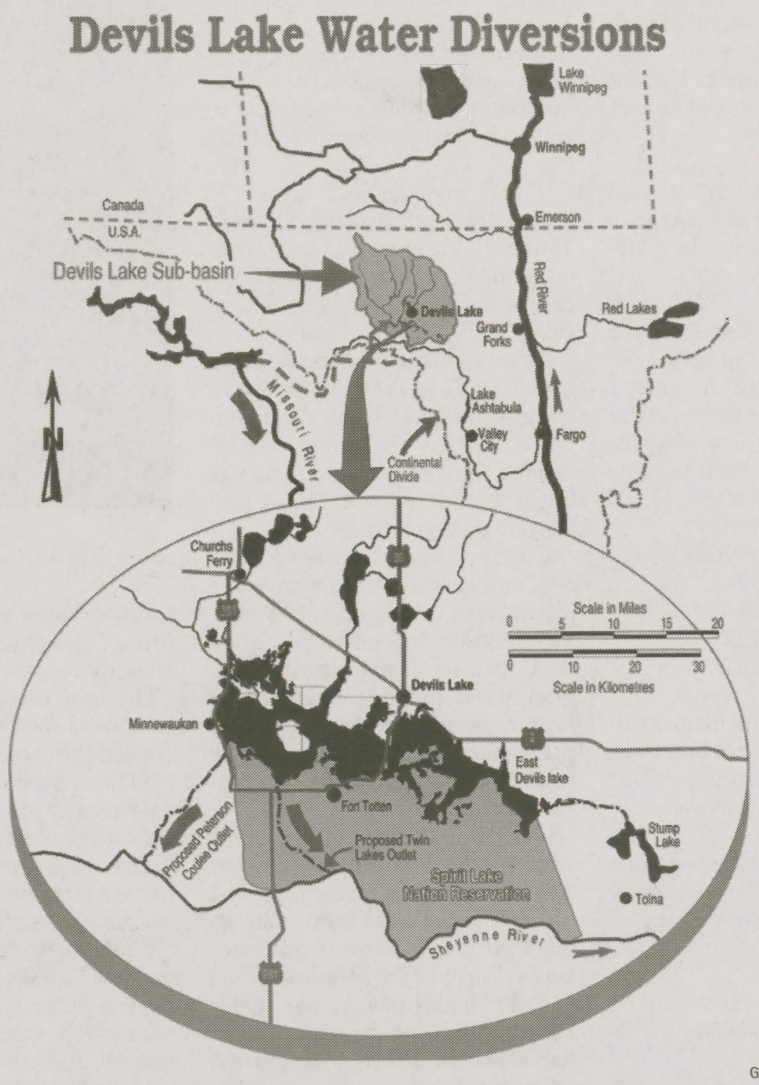
Since 1993, high levels of precipitation have caused the lake to rise nearly 25 feet (about 7.5 metres), flooding homes, farmland, and state infrastructure. The swelling lake has cost the North Dakota government over $400 million US.

Of concern to Manitoba provincial officials is the geographic isolation of Devils Lake, which has not drained into Lake Winnipeg for over 1,000 years. This isolation means that some bacteria and diseases in Devils Lake could enter Lake Winnipeg, potentially damaging the lake's $20 million a year fishery.

No large-scale environmental assessments were done prior to the construction of the outlet, and scientists are unsure what will happen if the diversion goes ahead.

University of Manitoba biologist Dr. Eva Pip believes that caution is advisable, noting that once the plug has been pulled on Devils Lake, it cannot be put back in if there is an invasion of a foreign organism. "We really can't afford to take that gamble," she said.

Dr. Terry Dick, a zoologist at the University of Manitoba, agrees, saying that this would be a good case in which to use the precautionary principle.



GRAPHIC PROVIDED

Plans to lower the level of North Dakota's Devils Lake will drain water into Lake Winnipeg. It is estimated that the diversion would lower Devils Lake by two feet.

"There is not a good handle on some of the fish parasites and certainly not the viruses," said Dick. "No matter how much we know and how smart we think we are, we definitely need to be cautious on potential introductions [of new organisms] and their relationship to environmental modifications."

Dick cited fish farms as an example, saying, "No one predicted the sea lice problem in the aquaculture industry in the marine environment."

Dick also speculates that other organisms could pose a threat.

"Alien fish species and species like zebra mussels could be problem as Devils Lake is an important recreational lake and attracts boaters from all over the U.S.," he said. "Even if Devils Lake does not have alien fish species now, as a recreational area it is a focus for introduction of unwanted biota."

The failure to halt the Devils Lake outlet in North Dakota's Supreme Court is a major set back for opponents of the project. The last hope for the outlet's adversaries is an intervention from American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who could potentially refer the diversion to the International Joint Commission (IJC).

The IJC is an independent body set up as part of the 1909 Boundaries Water Treaty between Canada and the United States. The IJC rules on projects that affect boundary or trans-boundary waters disputes.

The IJC can only act if both the Canadian and United States governments agree to its use.

If referred to the commission, the Devils Lake diversion would be suspended pending their study and recommendation.

The Canadian government has already stated that it would abide with IJC's decision.

Canadian officials fear a decision to go ahead with the Devils Lake diversion without referring to the IJC could damage bilateral relations between the two countries in future disputes.

"If this doesn't go to the IJC, there are going to be states and provinces doing whatever they want on water projects on a unilateral basis because there will be no respect for an international treaty," said Doer. "This is bigger than North Dakota-Manitoba."

The decision regarding the Devils Lake diversion could impact B.C., where Premier Gordon Campbell's Liberal government has allowed the mining of coal in the Flathead River region of the province. The Montana state government, which lies downstream from the mines, has requested that further operation and expansion be referred to the IJC.

Should the United States government refuse to refer the Devils Lake diversion to the IJC, the government of Canada could react by refusing the Montana request.

"What leverage will either government have in the future if a state or a province wants to proceed with a trans-boundary water project, citing Devils Lake as an excuse to avoid the inconvenience of proper environmental assessment?" asked the Canadian government in a recent statement regarding Devils Lake.

The issue is now a topic of diplomacy at the highest level, with the Canadian government taking the issue to both Rice and President Bush.

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Graduate Students' Society
Notice of Referendum
Due to high usage, the GSS Extended Health Plan requires a premium increase for 2005/06. The GSS is asking all grad students for their input. More information will be available at the Grad Centre and at *http://gss.uvic.ca* by June 23.
VOTING:
Thursday and Friday, July 14 &15
You can vote at the Grad Centre from 10am - 4pm
or vote online at:
http://webvote.uvic.ca
GSS

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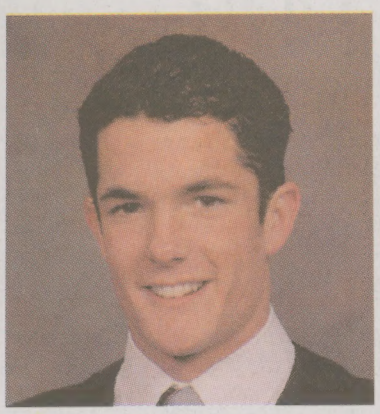


Jeromy Yeo Pollard

April 22, 1982 - May 19, 2005

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved Jeromy. As we struggle with this overpowering loss, we remember all that he was and all that he meant to every person who knew him.

Jeromy leaves behind his loving and wonderful soul mate, Loren Husband and her family who had taken him into their hearts. He is survived by his dad, Allan Pollard, stepmom, Nancy Bennett; brothers Michael, Tony and Tim, Darren Bennett and sister, Glenda Trent; niece Amanda; his Winter family, Bill, Jesse, Rachel, Trudi and Ashley; aunts Joan, Mavis, Nora and Jill, and all loving members of the Pollard, Fisher, Achurch, Dougan and Chatterton families.

Jeromy goes on to meet with his mom, Linda (nee Winter), Grandpa Bill, Uncle Greg and Grandma Eleanor.

Jeromy had a large network of friends and associates from his school years at Duncan Christian School, Brentwood College and the University of Victoria, where he was just finishing his fifth year of studies in political science.

Jeromy put everything he had into his life. He was always enthusiastic, energetic, keen and bright. He excelled at sports, school and anything he embarked upon. He was loved and admired and will forever be with us.

A service of remembrance was held June 4 at St. John's Anglican Church, where Jeromy was a lifelong member.

A bursary has been set up at the University of Victoria in honour of Jeromy. To contribute, forward a cheque payable to the University of Victoria with "Jeromy Pollard Memorial Fund" written on the cheque's memo line to:

Jeromy Pollard Memorial Fund
c/o Development Office
University of Victoria
PO Box 3060 STN CSC
Victoria, B.C. V8R 4K2

Please provide your full mailing address so that a receipt can be issued. Receipts will automatically be issued for gifts of $25 or more.

Donations can also be made on-line at http://development.uvic.ca using the "Now you can give online . . ." link.

Queries about the fund can be made to Anthony Salekin at 250-472-5031.

Condolences may be offered at www.sands-funeral.com

Arrangements by Sands of Duncan

Salish camas harvest returns

Cultivation may help restore Garry oak and camas ecosystems

by Rosie Westwood

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

A local group will pick the edible bulbs of the camas wildflower.

When members of the Coast Salish Nation gather June 22 to harvest camas bulbs, it will have been close to 150 years since the last such gathering.

"Their management practices shaped the land," explained Pamela Tudge, a UVic Environmental Studies student, who is organizing the camas harvest along with Cheryl Bryce of the Songhees Nation.

Tudge is taking the research of UVic's Dr. Brenda Beckwith on the ethno-ecology of camas and putting it to practical use. Beckwith recreated the harvest conditions and found they improved camas production and growth.

"That humans can make a positive influence on ecosystems is a revolutionary thought," said Tudge.

Restoration and protection of an area usually means staying out. Now, she is looking to involve First Nation peoples in an initiative to make harvesting the strategy for restoring Garry oak and camas ecosystems.

Settlement of the area, including what is now Victoria, by colonists destroyed the landscape that First Nations people had been cultivating with yearly harvests and controlled burns of the meadows.

"They had huge camas fields managed by family groups who harvested for themselves and the entire area," said Tudge.

The stretch of sapphire wildflowers amongst Garry oak trees appeared untamed to the eyes of the first European settlers, who built Victoria on the meadows. In doing so, they destroyed a main source of carbohydrates and an important time of gathering for the local First Nations people.

This time was particularly significant for women, who harvested and cooked the camas bulbs.

"[The event is] looking at aboriginal women's role, a role that got lost right away when settlers came," said Tudge, adding organizers hope the harvest increases awareness of how women's roles changed.

While the harvest will involve local First Nations people and will include a pit cook, the goal is not to re-create a traditional ceremony. Instead, Tudge wants to "bring people together to talk about camas, for people to look at is as a diet option."

Between 60 and 100 people are expected to attend. The harvest will be a day-long event, and will include digging up the camas, a feast, ethno-botanical walks lead by Dr. Nancy Turner, and talks about camas, traditional foods and the importance of local foods.

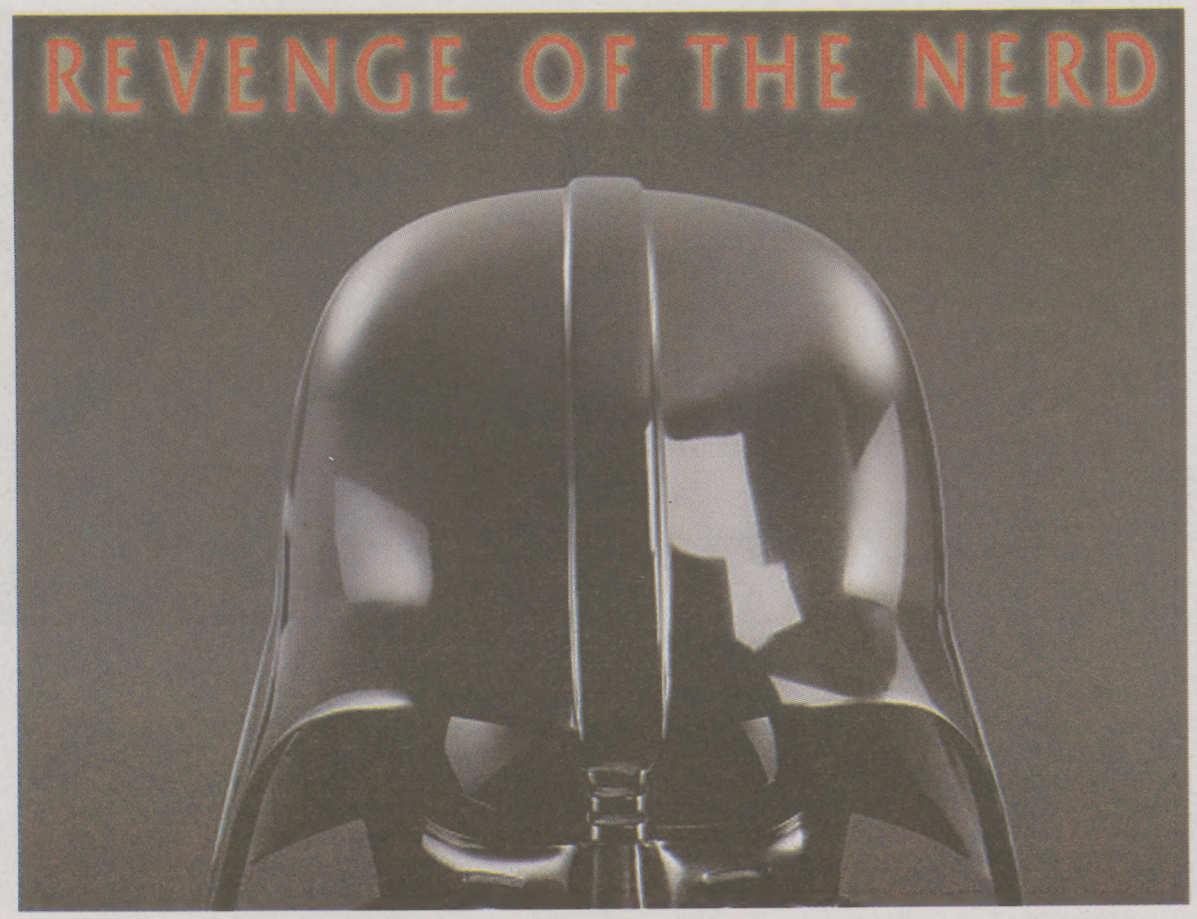
Tudge said that the idea harvesting could help restore an ecosystem is "hard to get through to the conservation groups."

The Garry Oak Ecosystem Restoration Team is one of the groups that are not yet fully convinced of the value of harvesting.

"We haven't formulated a firm 'this is good' or 'this is bad,'" said outreach co-ordinator Chris Junck.

But Tudge isn't worried. "[The camas harvest] has a doctoral research thesis behind it."

Although the harvest falls the day after National Aboriginal Day, Tudge says it is more coincidence than planning. The traditional time for harvesting falls at the end of June and early July.



PROVIDED PHOTO • GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

A burgeoning nerd-friendly youth culture could make 'cool' obsolete

by Sacha Narine

He wrote and performed sporadically funny song parodies like "Eat It" and "Like a Surgeon." He starred in his own comedy movie, *UHF*, alongside Michael "Kramer" Richards. But where is he now, you ask? What the hell happened to "Weird Al" Yankovic?

Nothing.

Apart from aging, doing a few spots on *Rock 'n' Roll Jeopardy* and shaving his pedophile mustache, Al's pretty much the same dork he's always been. It's our *society* that's changed, eschewing its ironic and condescending love of nerds for a modern nerd lust.

We've got geek chic now, and nerdcore is on the rise. No longer are nerds the cute, pet-like entities that others turn to for computer repairs and math tutoring. We can't laugh *at* "Weird Al" anymore, and he's not funny enough for us to laugh *with* him. It might be wishful thinking, but perhaps "cool" is gone, reverted to a word with no meaning other than "the opposite of warm."

Pop down to a tattoo studio and ask an artist how many times they've inked Darth Vader, binary (ones and zeroes), the Apple logo, a critter from Dungeons and Dragons (D&D), the bad guy from *Final Fantasy*, or anything else you'd consider a markedly nerdy image. The answer might surprise you.

Go to a club on any "alternative" night and keep an eye out for those thick-rimmed black glasses that burst into the alt mainstream back in the 1990s, when Janeane Garofalo made sarcasm more desirable than big tits or biceps. Look for the indie combovers, the forehead-shrouding geek-hair that underweight nerd guys embrace with such gusto. Step out onto the sidewalk and listen to the smoke-break conversations between geek-chic scenesters and their mildly awkward friends.

"Rilo Kiley *was* good. They signed to Warner Bros., and you just know the next album is gonna suck."

"I think he took it a little too far with *Life Aquatic*. The Bowie covers were a nice touch, but *Rushmore* was funnier . . . less of an in-joke."

"Yeah, there are parts in *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Zarathustra* that seem proto-Nazi, but if you read Nietzsche looking for that stuff, you're gonna find it."

If you're not liable to say anything like that, it probably sounds pretentious, unrealistic and hyper-critical. Such are the thought processes of the standard nerd, past and present.

Peer back through time to the gaming nerds of the hair-tastic '70s and their mulling over D&D minutiae. Look to the '60s pop nerd and his baffling Ed Sullivan trivia. Consider the '90s punk nerd and her obsession with early punk rock and the mythic year of 1977, in which the Sex Pistols and The Clash broke the mainstream while The Misfits and The Exploited stepped into the studio for the first time.

Whether it's the Forgotten Realms or Kurosawa, fanatical knowledge of trivia is the hallmark of nerdiness. What separates music snobs, who revel in original vinyl and rare B-sides, from the guy at EB Games who can tell you the best way to take down a level 60 dragon in *World of Warcraft*? Not much. In fact, the guy at EB might just be a music snob, and the snob at HMV might enjoy fighting virtual dragons in his spare time. Knowing too much about something you love too much — that, my friends, is the essence of nerdhood.

It's no hardcore or softcore, but the word nerdcore is slowly edging its way towards utility. Coined by MC Frontalot, the self-proclaimed "world's 579th-greatest rapper," nerdcore refers to music, specifically white-boy hip hop, that embraces nerd culture, obsessions with trivia, being uncool (whatever that means), and living in a generally silly social stratum — the polymorphous North American middle class.

Frontalot's album *Nerdcore Hiphop* contains funny/clever nuggets like "Indier than Thou" and "I Heart Fags," but nerdcore won't be the MC's trademark much longer. Soon it shall be usurped by talented geeks the world over, those who can't identify with hardcore, who aren't macho enough for rock, who find heavy metal hard on the ears. Expect nerdcore to expand and broaden, mingling incestuously with geek chic and pushing nerdiness even closer to the mainstream.

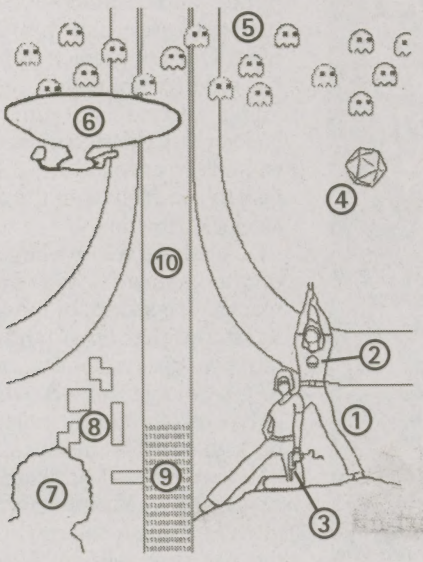
Trend watchers might be tempted to rush out and buy a Nietzsche reader (you can have mine), a stack of indie pop CDs, and a copy of *Star Trek 5* (not even funny), but they'd be making a mistake. In the past, following the latest trends amounted to buying some clothes and grabbing a couple new CDs. You might have had to endure a piercing to get in on punk or grunge, or smear a quarter pound of "product" into your hair to get that signature stolen-from-David-Beckham look, but it'll take a hell of a lot more to get in with the nerd crowd.

You'll actually have to care deeply about something utterly inane, and that's pretty hard to fake. Are you willing to manufacture a *Lord of the Rings* obsession, watching and re-watching those 13-hour extended editions with scenes of Gandalf baking a yam casserole? Can you memorize the turn-ons and turn-offs of every member of The Polyphonic Spree? Can you force yourself to ignore the cartoonish vapidity of *Star Wars* and spend weeks learning to growl like a Wookiee?

These are all things that real nerds do without prompting, without hesitation. We have become nerds because moderation means nothing to us. The words "well" and "rounded" don't fit together in a nerd's mind. We devote ourselves to a few selected obsessions with little regard for what we might be missing. In order to feign nerdiness, you can't just give yourself a shitty haircut and buy a few Nintendo games. It takes dedication — dedication to something genuinely unimportant.

How will nerd culture fit into the mainstream? Will it be like all other trends, with a few true nerds bitching about its popularity and scores of lazy followers talking the talk? Will nerd culture alienate the beach-partying, top-40-listening hordes, who are already struggling to cope with their embarrassing ignorance of Brat Pack movies and comic books? For perhaps the first time, will the boisterous, confident social heroes who ruled our high schools be pushed aside by sarcastic nerds who never make eye contact?

Imagine a world in which muscle-bound bravado and bleach-blonde sexuality tremble before the might of sardonic wit and trivial obsession. It sounds like a *Twilight Zone* episode, but one that any self-respecting nerd would buy on eBay quicker than you can say, "Special Edition DVD."



ON THE COVER
A guide to the geekery

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8 • *Tetris* blocks
9 • Binary code
10 • The Atari logo

Saga of the Bat

by Chris Wooding

With the release of *Batman Begins*, comic geeks and moviegoers alike are asking themselves: is this going to be the one?

As eager as they are to thrill to the latest cinematic translation of the Dark Knight, fans are aware that this is the seventh attempt to bring Batman to the big screen — a task that has met with varying degrees of success. To maintain the comic roots of such a complex character while coming up with a bankable production is no easy feat and, as these films show, sacrifices have been made.

Batman (1966)

A Penguin submarine, dehydrated goons, and shark repellent Bat-spray. It is campy fun, but nothing more.

Batman (1989)

Director Tim Burton captures the dark atmosphere of the comics nicely, but loses focus of the title character to an over-the-top Jack Nicholson as the Joker. Michael Keaton does an excellent job in the Bat-suit, but some are put off by his weak portrayal of alter-ego Bruce Wayne. Diehard comic and movie fans make it one of the highest grossing comic films of all time.

Batman Returns (1992)

Keaton and Burton return with a darker story that places even more focus on the villains. Fans are thrilled with the performance of Michelle Pfeiffer as Catwoman, barely noticing Batman's supporting role status. Parents are angry over the violence and the vile Penguin (Danny DeVito), and refuse to let their kids see it. These elements, plus a slow plot, make it a film solely for the Bat-fans.

Batman: Mask of the Phantasm (1993)

The one that gets it right is also the one nobody sees. This animated film has a complex plot about the motivations of the Dark Knight and perfectly characterizes both him and the Joker. Low theatre runs ensure no one notices it until video.

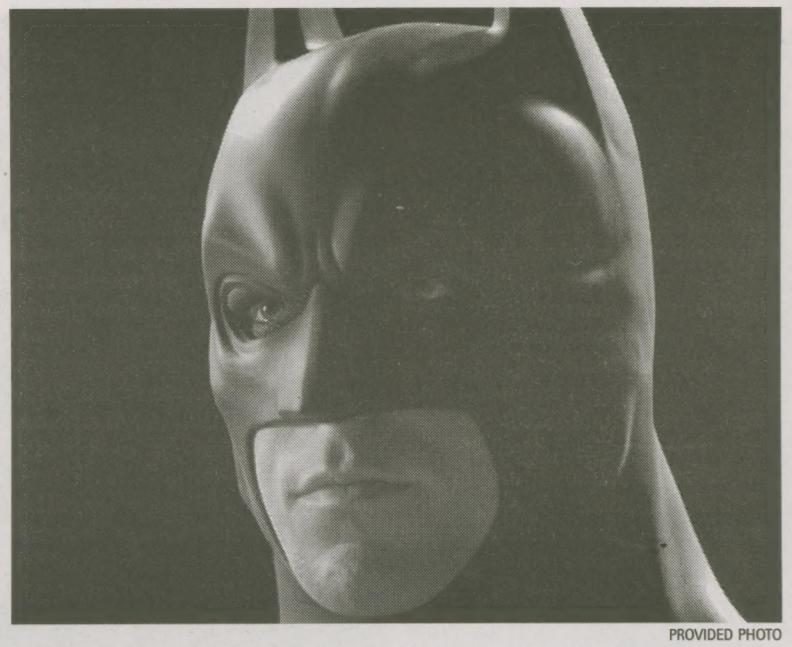
Batman Forever (1995)

Director Joel Schumacher comes aboard to make the series more kid-friendly. Gotham City becomes a mess of neon lights and giant statues. Jim Carrey and Tommy Lee Jones forsake all known characterization of The Riddler and Two-Face in favour of being a pair of wacky bad guys. Sidekick Robin makes his debut, with Chris O'Donnell giving a passable performance. Val Kilmer brings a muscular physique and a sense of humanity to Bruce Wayne, but goes with the kiddie flow as Batman and loses the darkness. The plot speeds through the action and comes to a halt everywhere else. Kids love it and comic fans hate it.

Batman and Robin (1997)

Schumacher pulls out all the stops as he lightens up the franchise even further. Proper characterization is abandoned in favour of big stars like George Clooney as a sub-par Batman, Alicia Silverstone as an annoying Batgirl, and Arnold Schwarzeneggar as the just-plain-wrong Mr. Freeze. The plot is non-existent and the dialogue is cheesy. Fans regard it the worst comic film ever.

There is much riding on *Batman Begins*. The filmmakers hope to erase the spectacle and poor characterization of the previous films and focus on the core of the hero. Whether the Bat will fly high again or no remains to be seen.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Christian Bale is the latest in a long line to wear the Bat-suit.

Twenty-something jazz pianist makes music a 'real' job

by Anna Czolpinski

Like many of us, Michael Kaeshammer was enrolled in piano lessons as a child. The lessons didn't last long — Kaeshammer's formal training in classical piano came to an end shortly after he got into his father's record collection, which consisted mostly of jazz records.

But those few years were enough. By 16 he'd made a name for himself on the jazz circuit of his native Germany. Shortly after, his family moved to Vancouver Island. It was time for him to get an education or find "a real job."

"I always wanted to play music," he said, "but I didn't think I could do it as a job. Having grown up in a little town in the Black Forest, music was not an option. There were very few professional musicians around."

But Kaeshammer continued to pursue his passion for the piano, playing venues in Victoria. He now says that it was the local artists and musicians who inspired him to pursue music as a career.

"Victoria is a small city," he said, "but for its size, there are so many great musicians." Playing in local pubs exposed him to people who were able to work as musicians, making him believe that his career dreams were possible.

Since then, Kaeshammer has become internationally renowned, receiving acclaim as a jazz pianist, composer and vocalist.

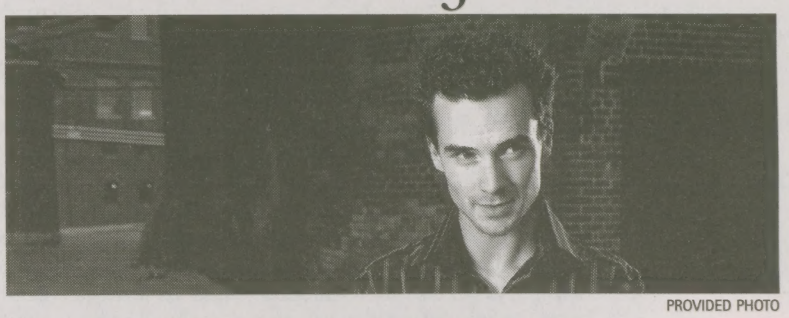
He has released four albums, toured widely, and received West Coast Music Awards for Male Artist of the Year (2001), Performer of the Year (2002), and Musician of the Year (2002). His last album, *Strut*, was nominated for the 2004 Juno Award in the Contemporary Jazz Album category.

Kaeshammer considers himself extremely fortunate to have found a means to merge his passion with what he does for a living. "There's always a way," he explains, stressing the importance of pursuing one's dreams, no matter how impractical.

It's worked for him. Kaeshammer has become one of the most exciting jazz pianists in the country. A background in classical music and traditional jazz piano, along with a variety of contemporary influences like lounge and funk, has made his style very eclectic.

The young musician's music is marked by an eagerness to experiment with vocals as well as the piano. With *Strut*, whose first song is appropriately titled "Twenty Something," Kaeshammer continues to explore jazz and make the genre relevant to a new generation.

Michael Kaeshammer plays June 25 at the Victoria International Jazz Festival. See www.jazzvictoria.ca for more information.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Jazz pianist Michael Kaeshammer returns to Victoria June 25.

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BOOK REVIEW | KAFKA ON THE SHORE

Murakami true to form

Kafka on the Shore
By Haruki Murakami
Alfred A. Knopf

by David Crow

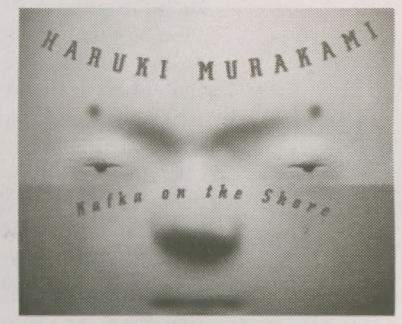
The theme of *Kafka on the Shore* plays upon Plato's notion that each of us is searching for our soul mate in order to be truly complete. Weighty stuff, but then Murakami has always been able to deal with such depth with remarkable ease.

Set in Japan, the story follows two narratives that travel parallel journeys. The title character, Kafka Tamura, is a fifteen-year-old who abandons his school, his father, and his hometown. As per the usual Murakami style, he is intelligent, polite, and conflicted as he attempts to escape the heavy burden of an Oedipal prediction his father has saddled him with.

The second storyline follows Nakata, an elderly simpleton who can talk to cats and has a shadowy task to complete with the aid of his sidekick, Hoshino.

Each tale serves up a large portion of the fantastic — a shower of mackerel, episodes of mass hypnosis, stones that open portals to alternative realms, and a cameo by KFC's Colonel Sanders, who pimps gorgeous philosophy majors in the back alley of Takamatsu.

Nevertheless, Murakami's blurring of the real and unreal allows ideas to flourish and move through the narrative without seeming to dangle uncomfortably.



Once again playing true to the author's traditional form, *Kafka on the Shore* has its graphic moment of darkness — its cat-killing scene can favourably compare with the torture episode from *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* in making the reader recoil.

As the story unfolds and Kafka and Nakata move through their journeys, profound discussions on philosophy and other erudite topics abound, and we are introduced to a hemophiliac of indeterminate gender, a middle-aged woman who is also a girl, and a boy who is both her son and her long-dead lover.

As a result, this novel might easily be one that leaves a number of readers finishing with the words, "I don't get it." But when it comes right down to it, you don't always have to fully "get it" in order to appreciate a novel, and *Kafka* is certainly a member of that class.

While perhaps falling short of the impressive strength of *Wind-Up Bird* or *Norwegian Wood*, Murakami has again produced a story that moves of its own accord, and it keeps the pages turning.

To air is human

by Chris Devauld

We've all done it. Whether you've done it for ten minutes or ten years, you can't pretend you don't know how good it feels. There's nothing like taking hold of your instrument and moving your hands with the music.

Everyone's fingers are guilty of musical masturbation. For most, it's a social embarrassment confined to the bedroom. Things recently changed — air guitar came out in a big, big way when the Official Canadian Air Guitar Championship hit Victoria on May 31. No more did the world's best air guitarists go unnoticed.

Rules are rarely enforced at these kinds of events, especially when the judges and MCs are loaded and the contestants are drunk guys who don't mind looking like jackasses.

And what's more fun then that?

The first — and most intense — act was Martin the Air Drummer. Refused would've been proud to see this guy belting out one of their songs. Everyone was happy to see him throw water in his face, strip his shirt off, and play the best air cymbals the world has ever witnessed.

Not to be outdone, Patrick Donisen stunned the audience with his remake of the classic *Top Gun* anthem. He didn't know how to play a guitar, but his distorted facial expressions and his willingness to look stupid earned him the title of crowd favorite.

And who could forget the two skinny skids, Matthew and Mark, who showed us what classic Pantera is all about? With their sweaty backs together and their fingers in harmony with classic beer metal, they taught us all an important lesson: air guitar is something you can actually be good at.

The grand prize, according to the MC, was "$200,000,000, a date with Jude Law, and a life-size replica of the Millennium Falcon." The winner was Nathan "Turd" Brophy, who rocked out to Boston's "More than a Feeling" to win over the girls in the crowd, as well as the judges.

In the world of air guitar there are no real winners — everyone is a loser. After all, it's an art built around the idea of being musically incompetent. And with the participation prize being a CD titled *The Best Air Guitar Songs in the World, Ever* I couldn't think of a better kind of loser to be.

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

Air guitar, fusing musical incompetence with looking like a jackass. Sweet.

Boots, beer, cowboy hat required

Git along to the Merritt Mountain Music Festival

What: Merritt Mountain Music Festival
When: July 12–17, 2005
Where: Merritt, B.C.
How much: $65/day or $195 for a four-day pass

by Rachelle LeBlanc

PROVIDED PHOTO

Take a cowboy hat, or they'll know you don't belong.

Kenny Chesney married Renée Zellweger. For years, I just knew I didn't like her. Now I have a reason.

If anyone else out there had to strike him off their eligible bachelor list, take heart: *Mountainfest 2005* is almost here, and guess who'll be there? Tim McGraw!

Sure, he's married, and there are burly security guards there to stop anyone from physically throwing themselves at him, but so what?

Repeat after me: "Yeehaw!"

This year is the 13th *Mountainfest*, and the lineup is spectacular.

Apart from McGraw, the mainstage will be graced by the likes of The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Paul Brandt, George Canyon (Canada's entry to *Nashville Star*, the country equivalent of *American Idol*), Lonestar, Doc Walker, and Chely Wright, just to name a few.

For those who aren't sure yet, but have a sneaking suspicion that this Mountainfest thing sounds like a country music thang — well, it is. Last year, an estimated 128,000 rowdy, fun-in-the-sun lovin' cowpeople entered the gates to the biggest party in B.C., and one of the largest outdoor country music festivals in North America.

And it isn't just for rednecks. Thousands of people go just for the party, which is non-stop from the time the sun comes up, pretty much 'til it comes up again, four days in a row.

The music's great, camping's included, and the sun always shines. A lot. This is the desert, after all, but the Coldwater River will keep you chillin' even when it's 30 degrees.

A typical day in Merritt includes getting up really early, since your tent will become a sauna by 8 a.m., guaranteed. Apply sunscreen and it's off to the river with your folding chair and a cooler full of beer. Next? Reapply sunscreen.

If you come for the music, and not just one helluva tailgate party, be sure to bring two chairs with you — one for settin' in the river, and one to save your spot for the concerts.

To get a good spot, line up with your chair outside the entrances to the showgrounds, and then when they shoot the gun, run like stink (after three days, this is probably a fairly accurate physical description), jumping falling bodies like Olympic hurdles, to plant your chair as close to the front as possible. This is "The Running of the Chairs", a hilarious tradition. Sometimes, it is accompanied by blaring music (last time I ran, it was the *Star Wars* theme) to add to the frenzy.

So if you're coming to Merritt, I'll see ya there! If not, what — you waitin' for a gilded invitation? Grab a cowboy hat and giddyup!

Bring

- Beer. Do NOT bring glass bottles to the river. Only bring cans, because glass bottles will be confiscated. Glass, drunk people, a river and lots of bare feet make for a very busy first aid hut.
- Sunscreen. Lots of it, and reapply often.
- H2O! Drink lots of water, especially if you're apt to take part in the walk-by beer-bonging.
- Camping gear. You'll either be in the infamous Campground C (All Party, All the Time), or tent-city. To find tent-city, look up and start walking. The bonus? The outhouses up there are a *little* more useable than ones down below.
- Toilet paper. See above. Trust me.

Dress Code

- Cowboy hat. It'll keep your face from burning.
- Boys: shorts, no shirt, puka shells (or not, depends on whether you're going for the Kenny Chesney look).
- Girls: bikini, shorts (or not, depends on whether you want a Daisy Duke tanline).
- Flip-flops.
- Cowboy boots.
- Jeans and a sweater. It's cold at night.

MOVIE REVIEW | LORDS OF DOGTOWN

Z-Boys go to the dogs

by Stephanie Bowen

Venice Beach circa the '70s was not a picturesque, sun-kissed landscape, host to parties of blonde, all-American teens playing beach blanket bingo.

Which is why it's a wonder that the story of its legendary band of misfit skateboarders — those incorrigible Z-Boys — as been refitted under the shiny veneer of Hollywood in *Lords of Dogtown*.

The original tale took form in 2002's *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, a documentary much more in touch with the hard-hitting, anti-traditionalist culture it portrayed.

While the documentary is loosely structured around a series of themes, *Lords of Dogtown* moves chronologically from point A to point B in a line so straight and narrow it defies the very unconventional creativity that earned the Boys their place in the spotlight.

The movie focuses on the three Boys who would become the holy trinity of pro skating: Stacy Peralta, Jay Adams, and Tony Alva.

Unfortunately, instead of showing any real character growth, Peralta, Adams and Alva grow cartoonish and allegorical, representing the paths that skateboarding itself has taken.

One becomes a serious athlete and businessman, as demonstrated by his yellow headband, Rolex watch and Toyota Corolla; one becomes a skating rock star, cashing in to afford a lavish lifestyle; and one maintains the integrity of underground skating, keeping it real by shaving and tattooing his head, and wearing flannel in the summer.

What's truly unfortunate is that *Dogtown and Z-Boys* takes pains to avoid that kind of stereotyping. One event is described from several points of view, all slightly contradictory, reinforcing the "anything goes" mentality that would create a culture of nonconformity.

Lords of Dogtown, on the other hand, gives us a dumbed down version that is a sleek, one-dimensional retelling, complete with romantic intrigue and a happy ending.

Perhaps it's greed that is to blame for the bastardization of a legend: *Dogtown and Z-Boys was*, after all, both lucrative and award winning. Why not rip off its story almost word for word, dumb it down for middle-American audiences, and cash in at the box office? And if all goes well, just imagine the merchandizing potential. Lunchboxes! T-Shirts! Action-figures!

If the Z-Boys were gone from this world, and not simply old, choked with nostalgia and touched by greed, they would be rolling over in their graves.

FREE TICKET WINNERS!

CONGRATULATIONS TO:
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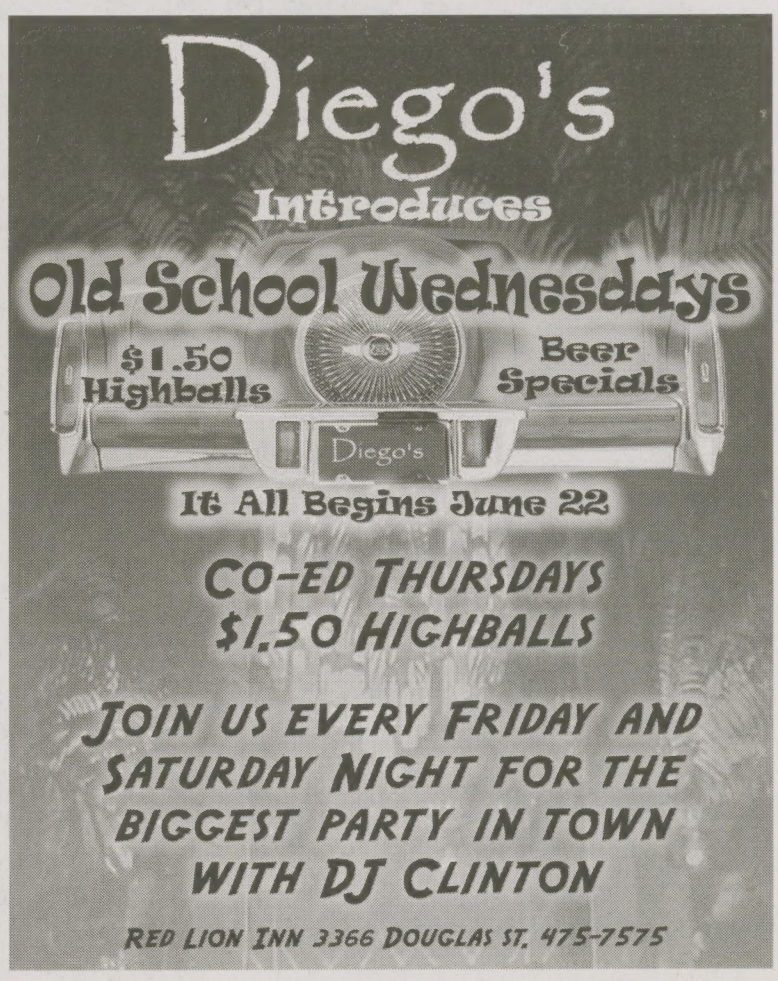
JACQUELINE LEBEL
MEGAN MORROW

Winners of a free ticket worth $200
to the Merrit Mountain Music Festival

THANKS TO ALL THE READERS WHO ENTERED!



SAM & FUZZY
©2005 BY SAM LOGAN.
HEY... IS THERE AN ELECTION COMING UP SOON?
I DON'T KNOW! LET'S CHECK.
THE DAILY GNUS
KLICK!
AND WHO WANTS ANOTHER TERM OF THESE REDNECK NAZI FAT-CATS AND THEIR CORPORATE DADDIES WALKING ALL OVER THE POOR, THE CHILDREN, THE WOMEN, THE BLIND, THE MIDGETS...
KLICK!
AND IF THESE AMORAL LEFTIST PINKOS WIND UP IN OFFICE, YOU CAN SAY HELLO TO TEN-YEAR-OLDS SMOKING POT, MARRYING THEIR GRANDMOTHERS, AND THEN THEN SMOKING POT WITH THEIR GRANDMOTHERS!
SO, HOW WILL YOU BE VOTING THIS YEAR?
RELUCTANTLY.
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HATE SONG
BY FRED GRISOLM
27
WELL, HELLO THERE.
扶
DAD! THERE'S A PACKAGE FOR YOU AT THE FRONT DOOR! CHRIST, IT'S HUGE!
EXCELLENT.
BUGLE
LOOK OUT THERE SONNY BOY. PAPA'S ON A MISSION AND THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR HIS LONELY CONDITION!
UGH... C'MON YOU...
C'MON OUT OF THERE, YOU SWEET LITTLE THING.
扶
JESUS FUCKING CHRIST DAD! NOT ANOTHER MAIL ORDER BRIDE. YOU GOTTA CUT THIS SHIT OUT.
REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LAST ONE YOU HAD?
ПОМОГИТЕ
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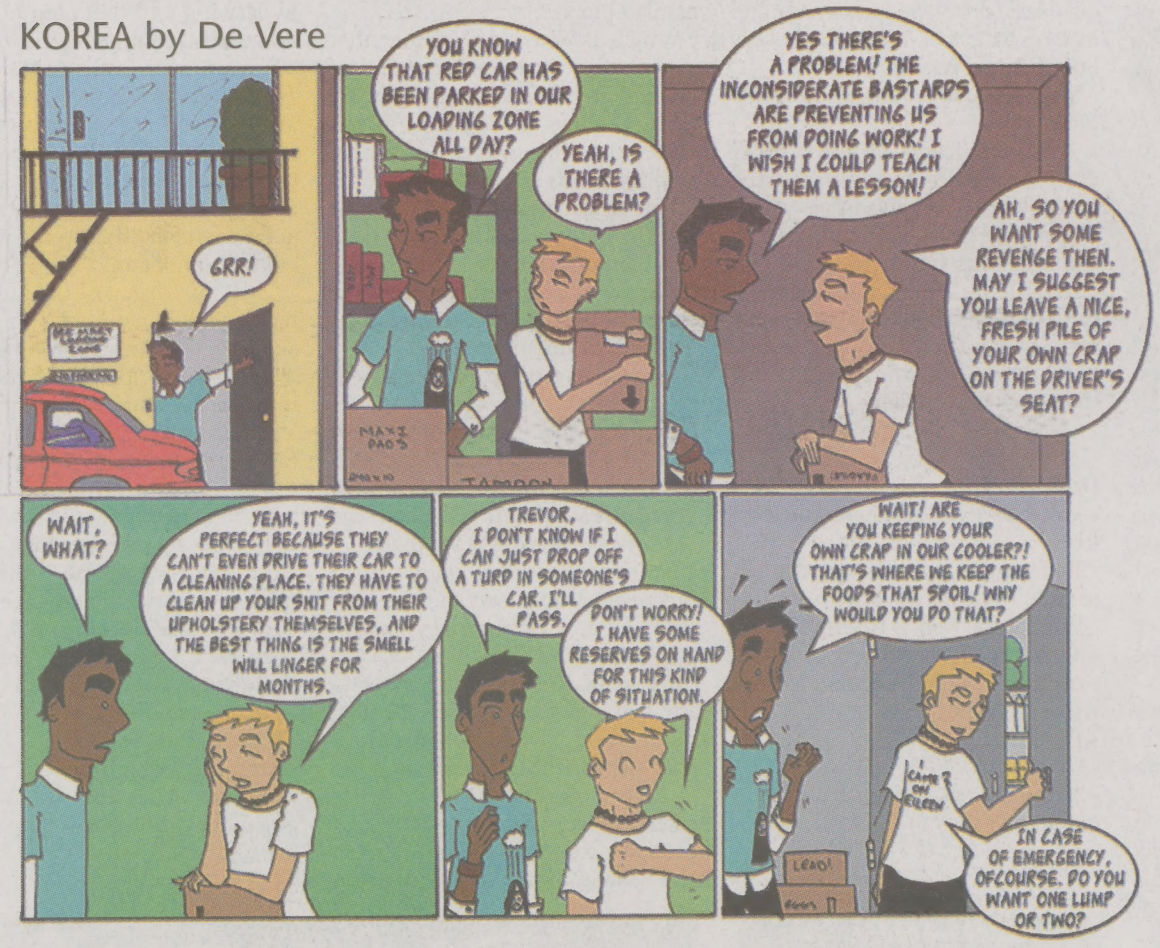
KOREA by De Vere
GRR!
YOU KNOW THAT RED CAR HAS BEEN PARKED IN OUR LOADING ZONE ALL DAY?
YEAH, IS THERE A PROBLEM?
YES THERE'S A PROBLEM! THE INCONSIDERATE BASTARDS ARE PREVENTING US FROM DOING WORK! I WISH I COULD TEACH THEM A LESSON!
AH, SO YOU WANT SOME REVENGE THEN. MAY I SUGGEST YOU LEAVE A NICE, FRESH PILE OF YOUR OWN CRAP ON THE DRIVER'S SEAT?
WAIT, WHAT?
YEAH, IT'S PERFECT BECAUSE THEY CAN'T EVEN DRIVE THEIR CAR TO A CLEANING PLACE. THEY HAVE TO CLEAN UP YOUR SHIT FROM THEIR UPHOLSTERY THEMSELVES, AND THE BEST THING IS THE SMELL WILL LINGER FOR MONTHS.
TREVOR, I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN JUST DROP OFF A TURD IN SOMEONE'S CAR. I'LL PASS.
DON'T WORRY! I HAVE SOME RESERVES ON HAND FOR THIS KIND OF SITUATION.
WAIT! ARE YOU KEEPING YOUR OWN CRAP IN OUR COOLER?! THAT'S WHERE WE KEEP THE FOODS THAT SPOIL! WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, OFCOURSE. DO YOU WANT ONE LUMP OR TWO?

LADY & DOG TURD
BY NORMAN ED BASKERVILLE
Why are children so cruel?
I can't have children...
my doctor says my semen doesn't taste right.

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre is looking for volunteers for the 2005 Victoria Latin Caribbean Festival. Celebrate multiculturalism by helping with volunteer activities such as: Children's area, Raffles, Posters, Site Stage, Ambassadors, First Aid. 3rd floor 535 Yates St. Info: 361-9433 ext 215 www.vircs.bc.ca

The BC Cancer Agency is looking for volunteers who are able to contribute 100 hours over the summer months. Volunteers who are interested in making a contribution in a rewarding environment, can e-mail jhurtig@bccancer.bc.ca or call 519-5500 ext 3747 for more information. Volunteer positions are available in the TLC Cafe, Pebbles Gift Shop and in patient support areas.

Volunteers of all ages are needed to assist individuals with disabilities to get out and be active this summer! By donating only 1-2 hours a week you have the opprotunity to participate in an activity you enjoy while giving back to your community. To get involved or for more information, please call Bryanna at 477-6314 or go to www.rivonlineorg/RIVSite.htm

ON CAMPUS

Take the "ONE-TONNE CHALLANGE" and do your part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions! www.co2zilla.ca or www.www.climatechange.gc.ca For more info on how you can reduce greenhouse gasses affecting climate change, contact the University of Victoria Sustainability Project at 721-7355 or uvsp@uvic.ca

FOR SALE

Like new VCR $30 obo. 920-7176.

HEY YOU!

Being so stubborn was obviously a HUGE MISTAKE. I just want to see you again and maybe you'll be more forgiving with me than I am. "Love can hope where reason would despair"— Lord Lyttleton.

Thank you for being so sweet Miss Sugarpants.

Hey you, girl in the lime green trenchcoat, you're hot.